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Ethiopia creates over 33,000 jobs for refugees

• Enhancing protection, support

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA – The Refugees and Returnees Service (RRS) has announced the creation of over 33,000 jobs for refugees across various sectors during the last fiscal year.

The Refugees Protection and Return Department Deputy Director General and Leader Biruhtesfa Mulugeta highlighted that these jobs include both self-employment opportunities, such as running shops and engaging in trade, and positions with employers.

The Ethiopian government has been actively providing legal protection and employment opportunities for refugees in collaboration with various stakeholders. Ethiopia currently hosts refugees from over 27 nations, with the majority coming from neighboring countries, particularly South Sudan, which accounts for 50% of the refugee population. The total number of refugees in Ethiopia has now surpassed 1.1 million.

See Ethiopia creates ... Page 3

Addis Tomorrow Economic Zone foretells capital's future: Premier

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDIS ABABA - Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) said the Addis Tomorrow Economic Zone, which will be built on 35 hectares of land, will showcase the metropolis' future vision.

The Premier made the above remark while launching the economic zone's construction which will be handled by a Chinese firm CCCC.

"Since work is the only path to realizing our dreams, our sole political ideal is dedicated to labor. Thus, we have initiated the construction of the Addis Tomorrow Economic Zone, which will showcase the future vision of our city," the Premier stated during the event.

In her address, Addis Ababa Mayor Adanech Abiebie stated that the economic zone is a huge project like building a new city within a city.

According to Mayor Adanech, the project

includes large malls, residential apartments, offices, educational institutions, health facilities, and extensive recreational and water bodies as well as sports centers.

"The economic zone will give our city a new look, enhance its international competitiveness, become an additional source of beauty, create ample jobs for residents, facilitate trade, become a large international shopping center, and include infrastructure that will provide social services," she remarked.



Taye Atske-Selassie

Ethiopia keen to access seaport peacefully: FM

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDIS ABABA – Ethiopia is keen to secure its legitimate interest of having reliable access to and from the sea in a peaceful manner, Minister of Foreign Affairs Taye Atske-Selassie said, following the conclusion of the second round talks with Somalia.

In a Joint Press Meeting with his Türkiye

See Ethiopia ... Page 3

Digital Ethiopia: Empowering youth with cutting-edge tech skills

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

Ethiopia is making significant strides in empowering its youth to thrive in a rapidly evolving digital world. As part of the ambitious Digital Ethiopia 2025 strategy, the country recently launched the 5 Million Ethiopian Coders Initiative, a groundbreaking program aimed at equipping 5 million young citizens with essential digital skills, including training in digital technology, artificial intelligence, and related fields.

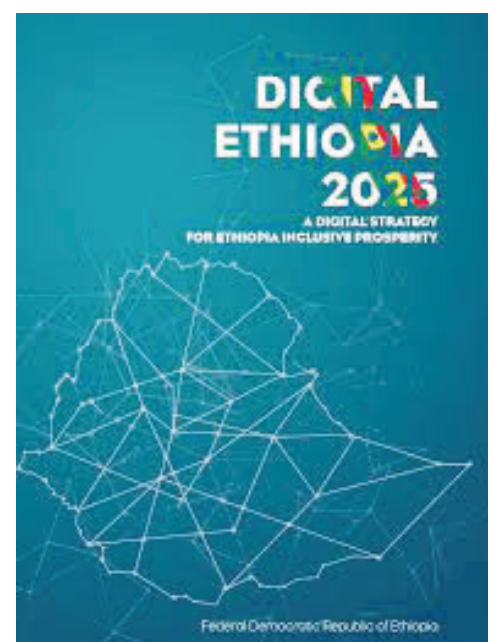
UNICEF Deputy Representative Mariko Kagoshima praised the initiative as a crucial step towards enhancing Ethiopia's digital journey, emphasizing the importance of empowering youth through education and fostering critical thinking, creativity, and

problem-solving skills.

QelemMeda Technologies PLC Software Developer and Founder Ashenafi Workie highlighted the strategic role of artificial intelligence (AI) in the new digital age. He noted that AI would serve as a launching pad for the seamless execution of sectoral and institutional activities.

Ashenafi stressed the need for robust server infrastructure and digital enablers to support startups and innovators in realizing Ethiopia's digital strategy. He shared his company's success in developing multi-purpose software that simplifies institutional processes, including an exam correction system that has significantly reduced costs in various regions.

See Digital Ethiopia ... Page 3





Council Commends gov't, political parties consultation forum

ADDIS ABABA - Political Parties Joint Council commended that existing consultation forum of Ethiopian government with competing political parties in the country enhances the culture working together on issues national interests.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) and chief administrators of states had recently held consultations with competing political parties on national, regional, continental and global issues.

Speaking to ENA, Political Parties Joint Council Chairperson Desta Dinka said that the previous political landscape of the country had been entangled with many challenges since the political culture and round table discussion were not matured.

However, since recently there has been a growing awareness about the necessity of give and take approach political debates thereby encouraging practices and culture of working together on national issues among political parties, and elites, he added.

He further stressed that the council is working to create a conducive platform of modern political culture that builds confidence to resolving problems and political differences through dialogue.

Desta reiterated that the ongoing measure of the government to closely work with competing political parties on common national issues are encouraging as it plays vital role to strengthen the culture of democracy in the country.

In this regard he cited the consultation held between federal, regional governments and competing political parties on national, regional, continental and global issues.

This consultation held with Prime Minister Abiy will play crucial role in inculcating the culture of discussion among political parties on key national issues, he underlined.

Furthermore, the consultation being held at every level among political parties, civic society organizations, other segments of the community and the government would provide solutions to national problems by creating clarity of roles, Desta underscored.

Ethiopia's agriculture experiences steady investment growth

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA - As Ethiopia continues putting utmost efforts towards achieving food security, significant investments are being boosted in agroforestry, mechanization and environmental protection, Deputy Prime Minister Temesgen Tiruneh announced.

Opening the Agricultural Investment Forum yesterday, Deputy Prime Minister Temesgen Tiruneh highlighted Ethiopia's untapped agricultural potential, emphasizing the government's ongoing reforms aimed at ensuring sustainable development.

"The six-year performance proves how Ethiopia's agricultural potential can significantly impact the overall development," the DPM said.

The country's flagship projects have successfully boosted productivity in cereal, fishery, and livestock production, Temesgen said while underlining the need to implement further initiatives to fully exploit the sector's potentials.

Investing in agriculture aligns with the goals of sustainable development, he said, adding the private sector and international organizations should support these initiatives since their involvement is



crucial to enhancing both environmental and agricultural productivity.

Agriculture Minister Girma Amente (PhD) also highlighted the government's efforts to expand the use of improved farming tools, soil fertilizers and seeds.

He mentioned that innovation and mechanization are key priorities to advance the agricultural sector.

Speaking at the forum, Plan and Development Minister Fitsum Assefa on her part expressed that the agricultural sector has grown at an average rate of 5.2% per annum in recent years.

The sector, which contributes one-third of

the national GDP and accounts for 65% of employment, is crucial to the nation's economy, she said.

Fitsum further emphasized the government's legal and structural reforms designed to attract more private sector investment, including from foreign entities.

She noted that financing had been challenging the sector in which foreign investment was rare. However, she expressed optimism that the recently introduced macro-economic reform would enable agricultural investors to access financial support from both local and international creditors.



Africa CDC launches report on AMR

BY TEWODROS KASSA

ADDIS ABABA - The Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) yesterday launched a report on Antimicrobial resistance (AMR).

In preparation for UNGA 2024, the African Union, led by its technical institutions Africa CDC and AU IBAR and its partners African Society for Laboratory Medicine (ASLM) and the Fleming Fund, launched a Landmark report highlighting well-defined and evidence-based proposals that align with Africa's position and needs on AMR

containment.

Africa CDC Acting Deputy Director General Tajudeen Raji (MD) AMR is disproportionately affecting Africa compared to other parts of the world.

Therefore, it is high time to create more awareness and mobilize more resources to combat AMR, he added.

Accordingly, Africa CDC is closely working with member states to ease the challenges of AMR through strengthening surveillance and monitoring.

He called upon partners, donors as well as other stakeholders to support and

implement the Africa CDC report.

Moreover, AMR is particularly acute in Africa, where it presents a multifaceted barrier to sustainable development, impeding the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and visions laid out in the African Union's Agenda 2063.

Accordingly, Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) poses a rapidly escalating global threat to human health, animal welfare, environmental safety, and overall health security, with significant economic implications.

Ethiopia, COMESA sign MoU to boost horticulture, market links

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDISABABA - Ethiopia and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to enhance cooperation in the horticulture sector.

The signing ceremony, held on Tuesday with the presence of key stakeholders, marks a significant step towards collaboration in the production of avocados, onions, vegetables, and fruits.

The MoU signing was part of a forum organized by COMESA in partnership with Ethiopia's Ministry of Agriculture and the Horticulture Producers and Exporters Association. The forum aimed to recommend and approve a roadmap to address value chain challenges in Ethiopia's horticulture products, particularly avocados, red onions, and potatoes.

Professor Ali Mohamed, Adviser to the State Minister of Agriculture, highlighted Ethiopia's potential in horticulture production and expressed gratitude for COMESA's commitment to collaborate in



improving the sector's value chain.

Abdela Negash, CEO of Horticulture Development, emphasized that the MoU will enable Ethiopia to work closely with COMESA, strengthening relationships among sector stakeholders. The collaboration is expected to enhance production and marketing, fostering regional cooperation,

boosting foreign market linkages, and creating new opportunities for farmers and exporters.

Abdela further noted that the agreement aims to overcome obstacles in the value chain of horticulture products, from nursery to export, by adding the necessary value to increase foreign currency earnings.

COMESA Executive Director John Mukuka reiterated the institution's focus on adding value to horticulture products and its eagerness to work with Ethiopia's agriculture sector.

COMESA is the largest regional economic organization in Africa, comprising 19 member states.

Ethiopia creates...

While some foreign media outlets have reported that refugees in conflict-affected areas of Ethiopia are under attack, Biruhtesfa clarified that these reports lack accurate information. He acknowledged that refugees sometimes face dangers when they leave their camps, but emphasized that the RRS is committed to raising awareness and providing essential services to ensure their safety.

In terms of urban refugees, over 81,000 are currently residing in Addis Ababa, while cities like Shire and Mekele in

Tigray State have also become key urban centers for refugees. Special licenses are granted to those who meet certain criteria, such as students pursuing higher education and individuals with serious medical conditions.

Job opportunities for refugees vary depending on the location and the specific projects in place. In some areas, refugees and the host community share employment opportunities equally, while in others, the distribution may differ.

The RRS also prioritizes the registration

and provision of identity cards for refugees, particularly those over the age of 14, to ensure they receive the necessary support and protection. Special attention is given to vulnerable groups, including women, children, and persons with disabilities (PwDs), to safeguard their well-being, Biruhtesfa elaborated.

The RRS has called on international partners to continue their support to ensure sustainable protection and services for refugees and asylum seekers in Ethiopia.



Ethiopia keen...

and Somali counterparts, Foreign Minister, Taye Atske-Selassie disclosed that the Türkiye-mediated two-day-long deliberations between Ethiopia and Somalia in Ankara was concluded on Tuesday.

During the press conference, Taye expressed sincere gratitude to President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and the Government of Türkiye for taking the initiative to find remedies for differences between Addis Ababa and Mogadishu.

Taye also stressed Ethiopia's legitimate interest and peaceful manner to secure dependable access to and from the sea.

He noted that Ethiopia has endeavored to deescalate tensions and resume relations in the region.

"We look forward to have continued engagement that will ultimately help us resolve current differences and restore normal relations. We are indeed cognizant that great things could be decided through continuous engagement."

Therefore, it is incumbent among the parties to stay positively engaged, look ahead beyond the current situation, Taye said, adding that Ethiopia looks forward for a more fruitful upcoming third round of talks with Somalia.

Recommending Türkiye's commitment to fostering peace and stability in the region, Somalia's Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Ahmed Moallim Fiqi expressed that progress was made in the second round discussion.

"As we prepared for the third round talks, we are hopeful that the momentum we have built will lead to a final solution," he said.

He also reiterated his government's commitment to achieve a peaceful and mutually beneficial outcomes.

Ethiopia struck a deal with Somaliland on January 1st this year to use its Red Sea port of Berbera. The Horn of African nation lost its Red Sea ports in the early 1990s after the Eritrean War of Independence, which lasted from 1961 to 1991, it was learnt.

Digital Ethiopia...

Ashenafi further noted that through pilot testing in various parts of the country, his company is implementing state-of-the-art software that verifies ministry examinations for grade six and eight students within minutes. He noted that this system has significantly reduced examination expenditure costs in Oromia, SNNP and Addis Ababa, saving about 6.8 million Pound sterling.

In the health sector, Blue Health Ethiopia Founder and CEO Biniam Alemu (MD) introduced 'derash,' an innovative mobile application providing emergency services. The app, which includes first aid and CPR training, is designed to shorten emergency response times and guide users in critical situations. With over 3,000 users and a growing presence, the platform is making a significant impact on community safety.

Biniam also mentioned that his organization has showcased its innovative activities on the international stage, receiving notable feedback. Drawing on experiences from other developing countries regarding

preliminary recruitment requirements, the innovator emphasized that youth have access to this life-saving service via technological gadgets, helping to rescue emergency cases and prevent property damage. He encouraged the younger generation to enhance their digital literacy and promote entrepreneurial skills by developing problem-solving innovations that benefit their communities and the country at large.

Meanwhile, Abel Masresha from Jireh Technology is addressing the needs of people with mobility challenges by developing an advanced wheelchair prototype. With less than 1% of Ethiopians with mobility issues having access to assistive devices, Abel's innovation represents a vital solution for millions in need.

Abel concluded that the current generation has ample opportunities to turn challenges into solutions while benefiting themselves and their communities by tailoring and leveraging their skills through startups and other technology-driven problem-solving projects.

Opinion

Notable records of Ethiopia in ensuring peace, security of HoA

BY GETACHEW MINAS

Ethiopia has notable records on keeping peace and security in the Horn of Africa region. It used to send peacekeeping forces to maintain law and order in the countries of the region. These countries have been under constant turmoil due to political skirmishes caused by alien forces. These forces wanted to weaken these countries and exploit their natural resources without any resistance. In this situation, the Ethiopian government has succeeded in securing peace and security in some countries, while in others the turmoil has continued.

The continuation of political chaos, confusion and disorder in the neighboring countries and in Ethiopia is a constant source of hardships for the people. Moreover, the natural disasters have led to the displacement of residents from their place of origin. They are forced to immigrate to the unknown parts of neighboring countries where they confront shortages of food, clothing and shelters. Also, the countries of the Horn have been exposed to both domestic and external conflicts designed by foreign powers.

Most of the countries of the Horn have a history of domestic conflicts that are entrenched to the societies at large. Obviously, any political dissent and difference may be resolved through local intermediaries and elders. The issue at hand is not the content of the political disagreement, but the hidden forces behind contending groups. Each group may be driven by alien forces that provide it with resources, including arms, funds and diplomatic support. The Ethiopian history is full of such external interferences in its internal affairs. The *Bandas* used to be traditional domestic saboteurs in the country that had been at the service of external powers.

Traditionally, initiatives used to be undertaken to secure political advantages. This takes place in the form of cooperation and progress towards sustainable peace which is brokered by regional and global institutions. Various institutes operating in Africa and the Horn area pretend to work with the government bodies dealing with peace and security in the region. They conduct relevant research that leads to the preparation of policy documents on how to maintain peace, law and order. Sometimes, they dwell on national identity, values, security and other political and social interests. They pretend to review and provide insights of experts on the issues they dealt with.

However, the Ethiopian political, economic and social issues require deeper understanding of the socio-

cultural situations in the different regions of the country. There are both wide and narrow differences in the different parts of the country that demand careful and deeper understanding of the realities on the ground. A foreigner with hidden motive may not grasp the whole paraphernalia and bits and pieces of the Ethiopian cultural inputs into the political elements.

Where there is political sensitivity, the issue of trust is imaginary and fantasy. Credibility has no place among politicians who tend to forget that their fate is determined by the people at the polling stations during elections. Free and fair elections will determine the leaders at the various levels of the political ladder. In the meantime, however, it is crucial to build the trust needed to deal with sensitive peace engagements that affect the lives of the Ethiopian people.

As mentioned earlier, this sensitivity arises from the absence of trust in the political arena. Alike what the government has done, political parties have to make great effort to secure the trust they needed from the people. In line with this, reputed Ethiopian researchers have to secure their independence and objectivity to dig out the level of trust in political activities among the people. These researchers have to establish their status as scholars and analysts before writing anything on political activism in Ethiopia. Also, they should not be guided by alien forces on what to write about their own country.

Regional powers are believed to contribute to stability and peace within their defined spheres of influence. The Horn region is assumed to lack a powerful regional state. Experts, however, have argued otherwise by referring to Ethiopia as power that emerged in the Horn region. It has been capable of expanding and enlarging its power beyond its border. Despite its socio-economic constraints and lack of internal political consensus, it has emerged as a regional power. Its military capability, population size, diplomatic strength and presence have made it possible to pause itself as a power in the Horn region. These opportunities have allowed it to drive peace and security initiatives in the region.

Ethiopia has also an impressive record of influencing and maintaining regional security using local and regional organizations. In recent years, the converging of Ethiopia's interests with those of the external partners enhanced its legitimacy in the Horn region, thereby strengthening its role and status. At the same time, other governments in the region have not been able to balance their position in the region.

Ethiopia has continued to gain high level of recognition for its role in maintaining peace and security in the Horn. However, due to low level of economic capacity, it has faced challenges to regional security temporarily. But, emerging as a major and influential security guard in the Horn, it has managed to secure the development assistance it needed from bilateral and multilateral financial institutions.

Regardless of the reputation it gained as the result of its contribution for the Horn's peace and security, it is struggling with internal problems especially related with peace issues. There is, therefore, a need to deal with the various global and regional constraints to its regional political and economic efforts. To merge and strengthen its regional power and gain more recognition, acceptability and credibility, Ethiopia needs to manage its internal political conditions. In so doing, it will definitely be in stronger position to increasingly play a more constructive role in the Horn area. It will guarantee the maintenance of law, order and peace in its neighboring countries.

Ethiopia is increasingly considered as a regional power in the Horn, as mentioned earlier, due to its military and diplomatic competence as well as its demographic size. It is increasingly engaged in regional peace and security issues which further indicate its will to lead and influence the region. As a matter of policy, its aspirations are not explicitly expressed by the government. This is not divulged in its official foreign policy document.

The position and status of the country within the region are constrained by its vulnerability and weak economic capacity. However, Ethiopia still maintains a critical position in the Horn area and plays an important role in regional peace and security issues, serving as a mediator and as a peacekeeper. It has also been able to suggest regional agendas using the existing regional and continental organizations. It enjoys its status in the Inter-Governmental Authority of Development (IGAD) and the African Union (AU), which contribute to its peace and economic development.

Horn of Africa is one of the most unstable, insecure and underdeveloped regions. It is synonymous with ethnic diversity, internal strife, poverty, hunger, drought and famine. Experts associate this region, including Ethiopia, with recurrent cycles and extended periods of hunger, drought, food insecurity, disease, displacement and migration of people. The region is also a source of refugees and internally displaced persons. Illegal cross-border movement

is common in the Horn region.

There is also illicit small arms smuggling and livestock theft. Added to these, there is high growth of population and youth unemployment. All these are impediments for durable peace, security and sustainable development in the Horn area. Nevertheless, in previous decades, Ethiopia has been able to secure peace and security, emerging as reliable regional power. The successful story here is based on the adoption of a strategy that is based on economic development, cooperation, and the support of international financial institutions. Moreover, the adoption of a strategy that guides the socioeconomic management in the country is crucial.

Other nations in the Horn may not be in the same position as Ethiopia is in terms of its historical experience of peace and security. This experience might be a useful one for the region since these countries of the region share similar socio-economic and political landscape.

Of course, as mentioned above, the region is known for its instability, insecurity and underdevelopment. To reverse this situation, regional cooperation and development plays a critical role for peace and security in the Horn, including Ethiopia. This may be used as good experience to share with other nations of Africa that faced similar problems of lack of peace and security. However, there are antisocial and damaging policies such as "ethnic" based pseudo-democratic strategies adopted by some countries in the region. Although the Horn is one of the most unstable, insecure and poverty-ridden part of the region, Ethiopia may gain a global experience that contributes to its peace and security.

Ethiopia may share its experience with other neighboring countries which are facing political, economic and social problems and conflicts. Most of these countries are confronted with contested political issues and economic failures. Each of them has been in disagreements over the common legacies needed for building a national identity. They all required national values and common interests that would enable them to strengthen each of their countries.

In case of disagreements and conflicts, they have to learn from the successes and failures of other countries. They should acquire lessons on how they designed their own strategies for reconciliation and peace. In other words, the government, political parties, and civil society organizations have major roles in securing peace and security.

Editor's Note: The views entertained in this article do not necessarily reflect the stance of The Ethiopian Herald

Editorial

Forum of consultation, not contention

With over 120 million people, Ethiopia is a populous country in Africa. Not only merely populous, Ethiopia is also home to people of diverse ethnic, religious views and socioeconomic status. Therefore, it needs political governance that can properly manage and accommodate this diversity.

It's undeniable that absence of a system to accommodate diversity has cost the nation dearly. It was a source of conflict that dragged the country back for decades. One of the solutions for such crisis is to put in place a plural political system where the diverse views and interests can be entertained and respected thereby they can become sources of cohesion and transformation than points of contention.

Ethiopia has been exercising multiparty system for almost three decades. However, due to lack of serious commitment to practice multiparty system in the previous regimes, opposition political parties were not able to contribute their knowledge and experience for the good of the nation. As they were also seen as rivals or contenders, so they acted accordingly. This led to putting the nation in danger as the political parties attacked each other's position regardless of significance to the nation.

Hence, it is necessary for the political parties to come to a round table where they coexist as distinct political parties but work towards the same goal, which is ensuring the prevalence of peace, justice, democracy and national interest of the nation. The success of such relation between political parties shows civility and advancement in the political culture of the parties and also signals bright future for the country.

Recently, political parties have held a dialogue under their political parties' joint council. The consultative forum is an exemplary understanding that the parties should further invigorate if they genuinely cherish an interest to serve the nation rather than pursue self-interest.

Building democratic system is mandatory for peace, justice and development of a country like Ethiopia. And building the system is naturally takes longer time as its principles and values must be inculcated in the minds of the people who are its building blocks. Hence, the first step is the establishment of political parties and then their honest and unreserved collaboration and consultation.

Therefore, the government and competing political parties deserve due gratitude for their engagement in the consultative forum under the political parties joint council. The political parties should nurture the current culture of consultation instead of poking fingers at each other as a means of addressing differences or showing up prevalence over the other side.

Indeed, as separate political parties with their own political views, programs or ideology they must stand firm on that as it is the normal and acceptable mode of operation elsewhere. Yet they have to keep in mind that they have to build a system where they reflect their stance in a peaceful and civil way without resorting to violent means. At the end of the day, they are the principal actors responsible to build the system and pave the way for a better democratic governance, justice and development of the nation.

Now the country is found at a critical juncture as it has to pass through the political and economic challenges at home and abroad. The government and stakeholders need due support in effectively concluding the ongoing processes of national dialogue and transitional justice as they are anticipated to address the decades old knots in the country's political arena. The country should also accomplish the tests of the challenges surrounding the macroeconomic reform that is believed to transform the socioeconomic development the country. The regional and global affairs that touch the interests of the country also call for the active role of all legally operating political parties in the country alongside the ruling party.

In short, for the realization of the country's goals of ensuring peace, justice and development as well as overcoming existing challenges the political parties sitting around table is an ideal solution and they must further nurture the culture.



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The Ethiopian Herald

Opinion

Ethiopia's Efforts towards Regaining its AGOA Status

BY ANTENEH GETACHEW (PhD)

Ethiopia was excluded from the AGOA preferential agreement in January, 2022 due to the conflict in its northern region and allegations of humanitarian crises. Needless to say, prior to the conflict, the US urged the Ethiopian government to open up its economy, which in its most part aligns with Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's reform plans aimed at transitioning to a market-based economy. Following the Pretoria peace agreement, diplomatic relations between Ethiopia and the US were rekindled, emphasizing the importance of these ties over the AGOA sanctions. Despite the Ethiopian government's efforts to improve internal conditions, the US has not yet lifted the imposed sanctions. This article aims to demonstrate that Ethiopia's actions, in light of the recent economic reform, measures to address conflicts through dialogue and address alleged human rights abuse through the Transitional Justice mechanism, should qualify the nation to regain its AGOA status.

Ethiopia has made noteworthy advancements aimed at opening up its market for enhancing trade relation with international partners and rejoining the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) by enacting macroeconomic reforms that liberalize markets and enhance the business landscape. The government has focused on privatizing state-owned companies and easing foreign investment restrictions, thereby fostering a more conducive environment for trade. These reforms signify a substantial improvement in Ethiopia's economic management, making the nation increasingly appealing for international trade and investment.

In addition, the government has actively sought to resolve long-standing internal conflicts by engaging in dialogue and negotiations with various rebel groups, which has led to ceasefire agreements and disarmament of militias in troubled areas. By focusing on political settlements instead of relying only on military action, the government demonstrates its commitment to achieving a peaceful resolution, crucial for enduring stability. In efforts to address past human rights violations, the government has established a Transitional Justice Mechanism dedicated to investigating atrocities, offering reparations to victims, and fostering national reconciliation.

Notwithstanding the fact that there is still more work to be done, Ethiopia's establishment of a new mechanism reflects a commitment to address its challenging history, which is vital for improving its global reputation. Analysts suggest that ongoing reforms and conflict resolution may position Ethiopia favorably for rejoining AGOA, a program that offers tariff-free access for certain African countries, aiding economic recovery. Reinstatement to AGOA would signify international support for Ethiopia's reforms and could enhance export opportunities while attracting essential private investments necessary for sustainable development.

Concisely, despite ongoing challenges, Ethiopia appears to be making advancements through economic reforms, employing peaceful means to settle conflicts, and ensuring accountability for human rights violations, indicating a positive trajectory for the nation. In light of these, there is a strong belief that Ethiopia is capable of reclaiming its position under the AGOA, and its restoration could serve as a key landmark

in bolstering the country's development and diplomatic influence in the Horn of Africa.

The potential challenges Ethiopia could face in restoring its AGOA status

The notable measures taken by the Ethiopian government to overcome different challenges are praiseworthy and merit recognition. However, there are possible obstacles that may hinder the country's ability to restore its AGOA trade benefits. Balancing the ongoing laudable measures with the anticipated challenges will, therefore be crucial in regaining trade privileges, as underscored in the paragraphs to follow:

1. Ethiopia should demonstrate its sustained reforms

Ethiopia lost its AGOA eligibility in 2022 due to human rights issues, and to regain it, the nation must pursue demonstrating its economic and political reforms are solid and not just temporary fixes. The government's efforts in Transitional Justice and conflict resolution need to show real progress and a true commitment to accountability and reconciliation.

2. Addressing Remaining Human Rights Issues

Despite the introduction of Transitional Justice Mechanisms, Ethiopia continues to face significant human rights concerns that require thorough resolution. To demonstrate genuine commitment to human rights and the improvements in the so far course, the country may need to collaborate closely with international organizations focused on human rights and vindicate context-related hindrances, both in the country and in the Horn, to fully meet the expectations and norms of the liberal world, particularly that of the US, overnight. On their part, the U.S. and other AGOA member countries are expected to worth these meaningful improvements before making any decision against the country's claim to return to AGOA.

3. Geopolitical Considerations

Ethiopia's AGOA membership is crucial as it enhances economic relationships with the U.S., but this may be jeopardized by Ethiopia's foreign policy stance if not an unbalanced diplomatic endeavors that could threaten American interests in the Horn of Africa. The U.S. might be hesitant to reinstate Ethiopia's AGOA status if its regional actions are deemed contrary to U.S. strategic priorities, requiring Ethiopia to strategically manage its foreign relations. To align with AGOA objectives, Ethiopia must demonstrate that its economic goals coincide with broader U.S. interests, necessitating careful navigation of its international relations.

Overall, a sustained and multifaceted effort will be necessary from the Ethiopian government to navigate these obstacles successfully. The government must work closely with the U.S. and other AGOA member nations to address these challenges effectively. Achieving consistent and measurable improvements in reforms is essential for Ethiopia to regain AGOA benefits and enhance its international trade ties.

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Editor's Note: The views entertained in this article do not necessarily reflect the stance of The Ethiopian Herald

Business & Economy

Contemporary economic trajectory at a glance

BY MENGESHA AMARE

It is well comprehended that the Ethiopian government has recently launched a comprehensive and well-coordinated homegrown economic reform agenda with the goal to safeguard macro-financial steadiness and continue economic growth. Yes, successful macro-economic reform requires coordination and synchronization among foreign currency (forex), monetary, fiscal, financial, and capital market reforms.

To balance the urgent need for addressing macroeconomic imbalances with the need to minimize potential economic costs, the homegrown macroeconomic reform agenda has been implemented in the course of helping the nation boost its economy with careful calibration of the pacing, sequencing, and timing of specific reform measures. Keeping this in mind, *The Ethiopian Herald* had a stay with Ayalew Adugna, an agro-economist graduated from Haramaya University.

He said, “The reform agenda has been implemented through a structured and coordinated whole of government approach. Besides, implementing the proposed reform agenda requires mobilization of financial and non-financial resources. Enhancing domestic revenue mobilization, particularly significant improvement in tax collection, coupled with external resource mobilization will be at the core of the reform agenda’s financing strategy.”

As to Ayalew, as the concerted engagement of all segments of society— private sector, academia, and civil society— will be important, broad consultations need to be undertaken throughout the reform period to enhance ownership of the agenda by all stakeholders.

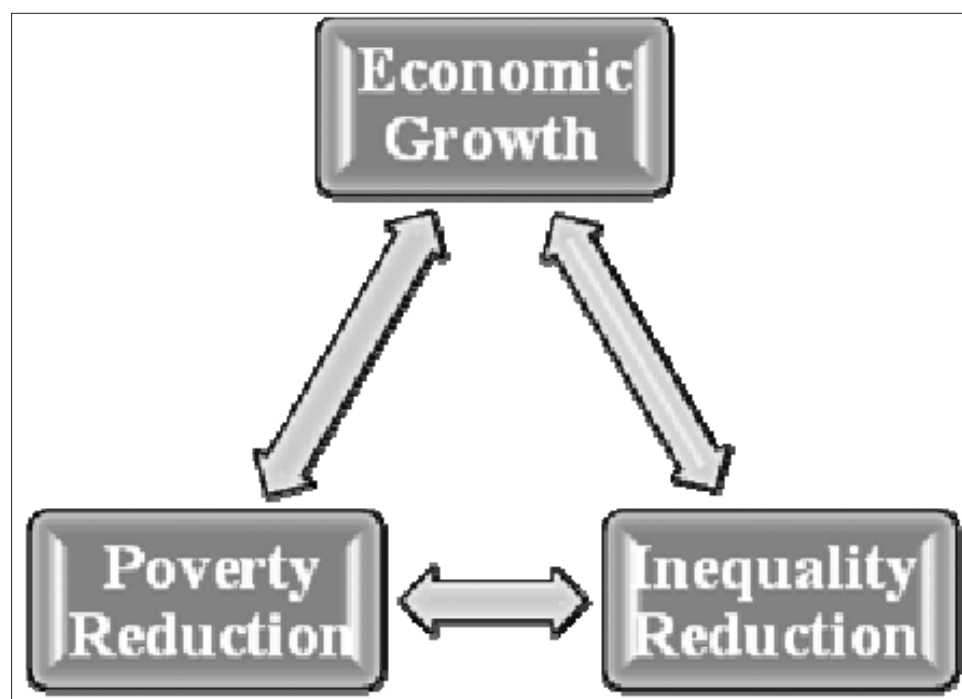
Definitely, Homegrown Economic Reform Program has aimed at unlocking Ethiopia’s development potentials designed to propel Ethiopia into becoming the African icon of prosperity in the long run.

He said that innovation and technological progress will play a central role in all national, regional and even universal economic development in the era of science and technology, globalization and digitalization, too. The ability to create, disseminate and exploit knowledge is a major source of competitiveness, wealth creation and enhancement of quality of life. A nation’s technological capabilities clearly underpin its competitive advantages and growth potential.

True, he opined, devising local mechanisms to promote homegrown economy is indisputably feasible and profitable as the nation would highly proud of its rich and abundant resources. The Reform Agenda has been a Pathway to Prosperity with a range of primary objectives.

“The primary objective of the agenda is to sustain the economic growth through creating an economic environment supportive of higher private investment and structural transformation. It encompasses three key pillars at the macro-financial, structural, and sectorial levels. Macro-financial reforms aim to reduce the risks associated with public debt, lower external vulnerabilities, arrest inflation, and enhance growth, investment, and exports. These reforms include strengthening public finances including through improving sector efficiency, strengthening the monetary policy framework with the objective to stabilize prices and support economic growth, and enhancing financial sector development and developing capital markets,” he added.

As to him, the structural reforms aim at



addressing bottlenecks inhibiting private sector growth through stepping up reforms to ease the constraints to doing business, easing tariff and non-tariff barriers to international trade, improving the efficiency of public institutions, and improving services such as logistics, telecom, and electricity. The sectorial reforms aim to address market failures and address sectorial regulatory and investments constraints to promote investment in sectors such as agriculture and manufacturing, and unleash new growth potentials in sectors such as tourism, ICT, mining, and the creative industries.

The reform measures will set the foundation for a robust, resilient, and diversified middle income-level economy through the formation of a dynamic private sector and modern policy and institutional frameworks.

Yes, transformation, be it social, political or economic, or all merged, is of paramount importance in creating a more prosperous, inclusive and sustainable society, nation at a larger scale. Such a meaningful transformation will be made real via investing in citizens, revolutionizing agriculture and achieving food security, spurring a ‘take-off’ in manufacturing and services, reinforcing institutions, calibrating state participation in the economy, among others.

He further explicated that ensuring macro-economic stability to sustain the rapid economic growth; rebalance the public and private sectors’ role in the economy and unlock new and existing growth potentials are the primary steps to make a difference in all aspects of Homegrown Economic Reform Agenda.

Ayalew said, “The reform has predominantly targeted at strengthening public finances including through improving the efficiency of various sectors, gradually moving towards a flexible exchange rate regime to address external imbalances, strengthening the monetary policy framework with the objective of stabilizing prices and support.”

Since technological progress and innovation also play a central role in a country’s economic progress, the country can advance to the global technological frontier and narrows the technological gap, an innovation-based growth strategy focusing on investments in research and development (R&D). Establishing effective linkage between agriculture producers and commodity markets as well as the commercial value chain, accelerating growth in agricultural production with a focus on strategic crops for import substitution and exports as well as developing a legal framework for agriculture focused financial services have to well

underscored for change.

“Ethiopia’s technological progress and development of innovation capabilities are the results of interactions among four groups of players in the economy including the administrative organizations that formulate and coordinate science and technology policies, higher learning institutions, the private sector that adopts and commercializes the products of innovation as well as institutions that interface among the different groups’ actors,” Ayalew opined.

A successful transition to an innovation-based growth strategy requires that the set of microeconomic capabilities and incentive structures, as embodied in the nation’s institutions and its technological infrastructure, evolve as the technological gap narrows down, he added.

Basically, he said, not only has Ethiopia to manage to survive and prosper, but it should transform itself from a third-world economy into middle-level- economy and at last into a first-world economy. Ethiopia has to have best experiences from other world nations in this regard. For example, as it reaches the limit of its investment-growth phase for instance, Singapore faces a new challenge of transforming itself into an innovation-driven economy. Besides, systematic efforts are being made to refashion its institutions and infrastructure to manage the transition to an innovation-based economy.

The public sector bureaucracy, in India, has been streamlined too, and there are nascent efforts to develop stronger global network links with key high-tech regions to expose research institutions to the global collaboration opportunities. To sustain the development of its technological capabilities, linkages between the publicly funded research institutions and tertiary institution, as well as with the private sector, are strengthened. Singapore has continued an ‘open-door’ policy to attract global talent. Our country, Ethiopia, has to draw important lessons from such nations which have recorded remarkable victory in due course of promoting the economic sector in all circumstances.

Yes, said Ayalew, the ongoing economic in general and macroeconomic move in particular will play a critical role in changing socio-economic and even socio-political perception towards progress, development and even entrepreneurship in Ethiopia.

As to him, country’s Home-Grown Economic Reform can serve as an example for other African countries if it aggressively capitalizes on the sector, and the government is creating a platform for sharing these experiences among African

countries as it is aimed at transforming Ethiopia from a largely agrarian low-income country to an industrialized lower-middle-income nation for the time being.

Responding to the question revolving around the potential problems facing the macroeconomic reform implementation in the nation, he said the government should continue to well implement the Home-Grown Economic Reform and facilitate reconstruction efforts, narrow macro-economic gaps, and increase private sector participation in the economy. Besides, the government should work on an additional economic reform plan that will help to control inflation, improve foreign currency availability and administration, enhance domestic resources mobilization, and increase local and foreign investment.

It is encouraging to know that the government has an overarching framework for its reform agenda. The important issue is whether the government is in the driver’s seat in setting policy priorities and goals, and not whether it has utilized technical support from foreigners. It is natural, in fact, many developing countries, including China and India, have actively utilized technical support from international organizations.

Many foreign investors, who have been attracted by Ethiopia’s success in building infrastructure and human capital, are sitting on the fence, waiting until the foreign currency crunch is well addressed as macroeconomic reforms are clearly outlined and well-targeted to the identified disproportions.

This includes investments in strategic initiatives such as helping existing firms and industries grow, innovate, and develop diverse talent; creating an inclusive, homegrown entrepreneurship ecosystem; rebuilding infrastructure, cities and/or other neighborhood corridors as flywheels for broader market-based growth and wealth creation booms.

All concerned and the business community coupled with the relentless effort of the government are expected to fuel good governance by bringing local leaders and institutions together to solve problems and create the conditions in which huge state entities, line ministries, employees, families, businesses, and other key partners are willing and able to stay and invest in the nation.

Most importantly, the federal government is uniquely capable of making the scale of investments required to help local actors adapt to external forces—from natural disasters to technological shifts—and unleash the economic potential of places, he underlined.

Generally, since the uneven economic landscape is a national problem, not simply a local phenomenon, a lot has to be done towards bridging all sorts of gaps witnessed here and there. To make this a success, public, private, educational, and civic partners in each regional state often come together to help their businesses, industries, and workers adapt to new economic defies or opportunities thereby bringing about real difference.

Regional states, citizens at all levels and other development partners have to create firm collaboration for such a remarkable coalition is essential for economic recovery because these bodies are centers of competition in the new global economy and those that work together to leverage resources and use their strengths could potentially overcome weaknesses and boost potency, and these steps ultimately help meet the requirements of the contemporary global economic procedures.

Art & Culture

The reflection of Negotiations in the Zimbabwean novel 'Nervous Conditions' (Part Four)

BY MEKDES TAYE (PhD)

Negotiation is one principle that is taken from Nego Feminism. The notion of the term is the skill of the person to agree to give something or agree to cope with the given situation for mutual interest and harmony. As Nneameka (2004) argued, negotiation can be made with the capacity of the woman to identify the appropriate place, time, and/or manner. In this regard, this section is going to deal with the reflections on negotiations that are made between characters and the situations that they faced in the three novels.

Nervous Conditions which are written by Tsitsi Dangarembga. The story in this novel is narrated by the daughter of a patriarchal family who lives in Rhodesia. The author tells the story through Tambu. As the novel depicts, negotiation was mainly revealed in the family of Tambu. In this family, the only influencing factor that affects the prevalence of gender bias is the indigenous patriarchy in the family and the society of Rhodesia. Women's subordination prevailed there even through the younger brother of Tambu, Nhamo, who was dominating his two sisters. Their mother Ma Shingayi was very strategic in approaching patriarchy in certain circumstances. Since the family was in a severe economic crisis, to cover the school payment of their child Nhamo, she negotiated this situation or problem by looking for a business that could bring money for her son's schooling. Tambu told this as follows:

"Fortunately, my mother was determined in that year. She began to boil eggs, which she carried to the bus terminus and sold to the passengers passing through. (This meant that we could not eat them). She also took vegetables-rape, onions and tomatoes-extending her garden so that there was more to sell" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 15).

MaShingayi had settled the financial problem by doing business that demanded her to pass lots of challenges. Because of her smartness in solving this problem, the family remained safe and bonded relatively. This decision of the woman could emanate from the sympathy of motherhood. But what is important here is that, she is active and responsible in solving the tension without conflicting with the patriarchal system. This means she didn't leave the problem to her husband. She was cooperative in filling the gap. The patriarchy put the man at the top to rule the house by taking care of only some necessities like housing. Those routine and consumption expenditures are most of the time left for the woman to be covered through their activity in small businesses that are up to their effort. That was why Mashigayi had done her best to cover the cost of her son's school fees. This helped the family to cope with financial lack. Her decision can also alert other women in the society to be cooperative and be a helpmate of their husbands. We can see that she exercised agency for the sake of her family. This instance illustrates the transition to development and equality.

Even if the system had already set up tasks to be done by males and females in society, Tambu felt that her brother should have his share in the house chores. This is what she called the "division of power". This is shown



in Tambu's words as: "Next time, I thought naively, Nhamo will catch it himself. If he wants to eat chicken, he will catch it and kill it. I will pluck it and cook it. This seemed a fair division of power" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 12).

Since her approach was naïve, her brother did the catching and cutting since he was impressed by her courtesy. Thus, she gained what she wanted systematically. This means that she acted naïve so that Nhamo, a male child, did what was not expected of him to get the food that she usually cooked. That is what Nneameka suggests being the way to ensure gender equality in a patriarchal system.

The other incident that shows the prevalence of negotiation was when Tambu decided to collect money by growing and selling maize cobs for her school fees. When she asked her father to give her seeds, he was not willing to do so. In his view, education is not important for girls since the destiny of girls is to take care of their prospective husbands and children that they will bear. That is investing in girls did not help the family to get used to them since girls could be taken by their husbands. But teaching boys is preferred since they stay within the family with their prospective wives so that their salary can be shared by the whole family. Tambu told this to readers as shown below:

"Is that anything to worry about? Ha-a-a, nothing, 'he reassured me, with his usual ability to jump whichever way was easiest. 'Can you cookbooks and feed them to your husband? Stay at home with your mother. And learn how to cook and clean. Grow vegetables" (Dangarembga, 1988, p.15).

As his words show, he was forcing her to stop thinking about learning by stating his logical premises. These premises are sourced from the patriarchal system that controls his mind. He said this so that Tambu should be ashamed of asking for the seeds. But she was not impeded by his approach and was determined to be educated. She did not confront her father verbally and; hence, no quarrel had happened; but she used her mind to formulate sound reasons. She remembered her uncle's wife, Maiguru who was educated but she didn't serve her book as a plate. Tambu was an observant and intelligent girl who could understand that education was an outlet for women to become independent. Silently she resisted his reproach; inwardly, she knew she was right. Tambu did not intend to raise this again. The conscious mother intervened in the situation and negotiated with Tambu's father. Thus, he changed his mind as the following passage showed. "My mother of course knew me better, 'and did she ask for money? She enquired. Listen to your child. She is asking for seed. That we can give. Let her try. Let her see for herself that some things cannot be done" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 17).

Her mother said this to convince Jeremeh. But otherwise, she knows that Tambu is clever at fieldwork as Tambu mentioned on page 17. Here, Ma' Shingayi approaches her husband in a way that he could agree. She knows that he allocates homestead chores to be done by girls and women, and fieldwork is supposed to be done by boys. Therefore, to help him approve this, giving Tambu the chance to demonstrate that she knows how to sour seeds is the best thing he can do. That is even if Ma Shingayi knows the strength of

her daughter; she told him that these jobs are only effectively done by males. Her husband, Jeremeh, agrees to give the seeds to Tambu not because he desired to see the success of his daughter, but because he was ready to enjoy the impossibility of such tasks by girls. His wife knows this intention of her husband and approaches him accordingly. Hence, she won by convincing him to the point. And he had compromised. Hence, Ma Shingayi succeeded by going around the patriarchal system.

Therefore, the problem is solved through negotiation because the woman negotiated with her man as Nego Feminism proposes. What matters here is identifying the appropriate timing, manner, and place before deciding to negotiate. Since Ma Shingayi was strategically approaching her husband, no one was affected rather the goal was achieved. Jeremeh gave the seeds to Tambu. Therefore, Tambu's mission was accomplished because of the smartness of her mother in changing the minds of Jeremeh.

As the novel portrayed Tambu faced another confrontation with her father when she asked him to allow her to go to town to sell the maize cobs. But her father didn't accept that journey again; "I forbid you to go" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 24). She persevered with her goal to be educated. Her commitment caught the attention of her mother, and she helped her in convincing Jeremeh again. Then, she went out with her cobs to sell. At this time her mother intervened as usual and changed his mind through negotiation skills. Here are her words: "If you forbid her to go, she will always think you prevented her from helping herself,' she continued, recovering her sense of direction. 'She will never forget it, never forgive you" (Dangarembga, 1988, p.25).

Since the reasons that she gave were too strong to influence Jeremeh, he changed his mind and agreed with his wife. He says, "Then let her go" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 25).

Tambu's mother was good at using the best approach in negotiating with her husband. The researcher believes that this is one way of bringing about gender equality cooperation and development in such a society dominated by a patriarchal culture. Since the man is also important for bringing the equilibrium, it is only negotiation that can help the woman to get the sympathy and readiness of the man in such situations. By creating awareness of women on how to be strategic in dealing with patriarchy, it could be possible to bring about the required change and development in the continent.

From the above discussions, negotiation is reflected in the family of Tambu; that is her mother was seen making a successful approach to her husband. But in the family of Nyasha, the authority of Babamukuru was very strong and close for the appeal of his wife Miaguru. This difference is interpreted as Babamukuru was doubly exploiting his family; he had a patriarchal mind as a local person, and he had a colonial mind as he was working at the top positions according to his loyalty to the colonizers' identity. Therefore, for him, the culture and identity of colonizers was the one to be privileged in his family.

Indepth

Empowering Africa's informal market traders to deliver safe food

Local informal food markets feed millions of urbanites in bustling African cities, but the consequences of tainted food could be illness and death for unsuspecting consumers.

Over 130,000 people across Africa fall ill and die from consuming unsafe food, according to the World Health Organization (WHO).

An estimated 70% of Africa's urban households buy food from informal markets, such as street vendors, kiosks, and traditional market sellers. Despite being a key to food and nutrition security, informal food markets have traditionally been neglected in terms of improved food safety practices, the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) has noted.

Informal food markets are crucial economic engines, providing livelihoods for many but hygiene concerns, and regulatory uncertainties pose threats to the growth of these markets where people buy and sell food.

Fishworker, Godknows Skota, from Binga District, trades in kapenta fish (Tanganyika sardine) and the Kariba Bream (Tilapia) harvested from Lake Kariba, north of Zimbabwe, which finds its way to public markets in the city of Bulawayo, more than 400 km away.

"Fish go bad easily if they are not handled and prepared well, which means I must ensure I process them in a hygienic manner so that I do not throw away my catch," Skota told IPS as he cleaned a catch of Bream fish for a customer at a fishing camp in Binga, south of Lake Kariba.

"I salt the fish to preserve them and I take precautions to ensure that the fish are not contaminated by dirt during processing and I use enough salt to preserve the fish well so that they do not rot," Skota said.

The significant burden of poor food safety on the continent's health systems is also reflected in its economic impact. Illnesses due to food-borne diseases cause around USD 15 billion in medical expenses annually, according to the World Bank which estimates that food-borne diseases are associated with productivity losses of up to USD 16 billion across Africa.

"Not that the informal food sector is responsible for the disease burden but that we need to have more focus on this sector because it is important and contributes almost 80 % of the food consumed by urban dwellers," said John



Fisherman Godknows Skota holds gutted and cleaned fish. Credit: Busani Bafana/IPS

Oppong-Otoo, Food Safety Officer, African Union's International Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR).

The African Union (AU) and ILRI have produced the first framework of food safety guidelines to support African governments' efforts to improve food safety across the continent's informal food sector. The draft guidelines have been developed following the AU's Food Safety Strategy for Africa, published in 2021 to encourage improvements in food safety management.

Oppong-Otoo highlighted that, the new guidelines will provide realistic and practical guidance to help governments work with the informal food sector to manage food safety risks and deliver safe food. Food risk can emanate from processed or raw food that can be contaminated, poor handling of food, and infrastructure, for instance, in informal markets.

"It is not that people want to produce unsafe food, it is just that they are not aware that their practices could lead to the production of unsafe food and so they need to be guided," Oppong-Otoo told IPS, noting that unsafe food undermines the human right to food and nutrition security for millions of Africans annually.

Food safety is a major health and economic burden across Africa. According to ILRI research, Africa is responsible for most of the global health burden caused by food-borne diseases.

Silvia Alonso, Principal Scientist Epidemiologist, at the Nairobi-based ILRI, says the guidelines are being

developed under a continent-wide consultation with informal market traders, agro-processing actors, and governments. African governments are expected to domesticate the guidelines by developing regulatory frameworks and administration practices to support their implementation.

Alonso told IPS that the guidelines under development by the AU and ILRI are currently undergoing a consultation process, with informal and agri-sector actors, partners, as well as with AU member states, before approval in 2025.

"Since the guidelines are also informed by ILRI's research as well as examples of successful interventions for improving food safety across Africa, we also hope to demonstrate to national governments that a new approach to informal food markets is possible and is entirely to their benefit," said Alonso, explaining that while not expected to be legally binding, the consultation process should pique the interest from governments on seeing the guidelines implemented in their countries.

ILRI has supported informal food markets across Africa through training on food safety. For example, in Kenya, the More Milk project has trained more than 200 milk vendors in Eldoret, to improve hygiene and handling practices.

Milk vendor Francisca Mutai, from Kenya, said she has gained knowledge on milk hygiene and improved her engagement with customers. Her customer base increased and she expanded her business, leading to increased profits.



John Oppong-Otoo, Food Safety Officer, AU-IBAR. Credit: African Union

"With this knowledge, I am able to advise my suppliers and customers on hygienic milk handling and the nutritional benefits of milk," Mutai said.

Another milk vendor, Daniel Kembo, also from Kenya, switched from using plastic containers to aluminum ones, which ensured better hygiene and quality of milk. As a result, he has increased his milk sales.

While in Ethiopia, a consumer awareness campaign helped reduce the recall of tomatoes sold on the informal markets. Dubbed "Abo! Eat the Intact Ones" (Abo is an Amharic word similar to 'hey'), the campaign achieved a 78 % recall rate, driving demand for intact, or safe, tomatoes in Dire Dawa and Harar areas by enhancing safe household tomato preparation practices.

Akintayo Oluwagbemiga Elijah, chief whip of the Oyo State Butchers Association in the Bodija Market, in Ibadan, Nigeria, has been made aware of hygienic practices in meat handling and processing. He now pays serious attention to the cleanliness of the slab where cows are slaughtered and uses potable water to clean the meat and its products.

Oppong-Otoo, said promoting food safety in informal markets is one of the targets of an ongoing One Health initiative of the African Union because food trade is an opportunity for economic growth under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

"The informal food sector, which includes people handling and producing food, is at the heart of the AfCFTA and it means that if we can support them to consistently produce and market safer food, then we would have more commodities to be traded," he said. "The AU Food Safety Strategy recognizes that even though Africa has huge agriculture resources, we have not been able to fully tap their potential because of the production of unsafe food."

It is projected that by 2030, intra-African agricultural trade will increase by 574% if import tariffs are eliminated under the AfCFTA. This would be a great boost for the continent that spends over USD 50 billion annually in food imports, according to the African Development Bank (AfDB).

(SOURCE: INTER PRESS SERVICE)

Law & Politics

Gliding the path to inclusive global system

BY DANIEL ALEMAYEHU

The world has followed a sequence of continuous changes in its system especially after the World War II. The essence of establishing world organizations such as the United Nations (UN) and other financial institution flourished after it.

While establishing a collective organization smoothed the skids for international cooperation, there has been the issue of fair representation and inclusive. Changing the current system has been particularly an important subject of matter particularly for the global south.

The issue of fair representation and inclusive system also appeared to be major priorities at continental and countries levels. For continents like Africa with vast geography and population the issue of fair slot in global organizations cannot be more important. Equally true, the architect of the existing international system comes to terms despite reluctance that it is through collective approach that collective problems are redressed.

It is true that there are some issues need to be addressed in order to create a world that promotes inclusivity and fairness. The world must ensure that all the nations must work for unified, inclusive and fair world.

In recent times, the idea of reforming the long served system of the globe is now becoming viral. Africa and the Global South at large have been calling for a true reform in the high tables and other international financial reforms.

The issue has been entertaining even by some higher officials during multiple occasions. Addressing the opening of the general debate of the UN General Assembly's 78th session, António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, talked about reform as "it is reform or rupture."

Recently again, António Guterres said "Faced with sky-high debt burdens and costs of capital, developing countries have limited prospects of financing the Sustainable Development Goals," while addressing the participants in a video message at the First Preparatory Committee meeting of the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Similarly, Claver Gatete, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa also mentioned, "The international financial architecture created nearly 80 years ago needs to be reformed to respond to the most pressing challenges of African countries in a more effective and inclusive manner," adding, "African countries are taking a leadership role in pressing for changes to global tax and financial systems, and they are clear that the international system needs to better support their sustainable development



aspirations."

To this end, the global system is designed to create a better world for all the people from every walk of life. The common global pressing issues should also need a global solution by incorporating all the nations and left no one behind. The world cannot handle global issues like climate change, migration, conflicts, terrorism and other challenges by just giving the chance to only some entities. Rather, every nation and responsible stakeholders have the burden to hold their hands together for global solution, and that needs the whole world to be the part of the process. The world needs to entertain comprehensive approaches to fix all its problems.

Africa and the Global South have repeatedly been working on maintaining a seat and permanent representation in the high organs of the world. The world needs to promote inclusion and fair representation in all global institutions. The call to reform the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), the plea to have a permanent seat at the G20, and reforming financial institutions have been what Africa and the Global South have been asking for.

It is the fact that some positive actions and decisions have been made in recent times. The move that the G20 member states took to provide a permanent seat for the African continent is what the world needs in order to include the excluded. However, the nations of the world still need further tangible actions in all other global institutions that need a surgery.

Speaking of financial institutions, poor and developing nations seek a fair handling from financiers and need to be treated

equally. It is true that the world does not work that way, treating everyone equally, but at least there must have an equal playing ground for all nations. The major finance institutions like the World Bank Group and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have also considered the pressing issue.

Accordingly, in the recent interview with *The Ethiopian Herald*, Tobias Rasmussen, IMF Resident Representative in Ethiopia, stated, "The IMF is focused on ensuring an inclusive international financial system that meets the evolving need of this region. We have reached some important milestones just in the past year.

The Representative also mentioned, "In December 2023, the membership approved a 50 percent increase in IMF member countries' quotas and agreed to develop by June 2025 possible approaches as a guide for further quota realignment. Also, late last year, we successfully met the fundraising targets for the Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust (PRGT), the Fund's zero-interest rate lending tool for poor countries. By March 2024, a total of \$19.5 billion had been raised for Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust (PRGT) lending resources, along with \$3.1 billion for Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust (PRGT) subsidy resources."

On top of that, the IMF Board of Governors has lately issued a resolution on creating a 25th Chair at the IMF's Executive Board. According to the IMF press release sent for *The Ethiopian Herald* Newspaper, it is stated, "On July 16, 2024, the IMF Board of Governors, the highest decision-making body of the IMF, issued a new resolution to increase the number of Executive Directors on the IMF's Executive Board by adding a 25th chair intended for Sub-Saharan Africa."

Again, the presser also mentioned that the resolution is made after the call made by the International Monetary and Financial Committee during the 2023 Annual Meetings in Marrakech, for the creation of a 25th chair to improve Sub-Saharan Africa's voice and representation and the overall balance of regional representation at the Board.

Kristalina Georgieva, IMF Managing Director, also elucidated, "The Board of Governors have taken an important step towards creating an additional 25th chair at our Executive Board to increase Sub-Saharan Africa's representation in IMF decision making, to make our Board more inclusive, and to reflect the region's role in the global economy."

Approval by the Board of Governors to change the size of the Executive Board requires an 85% majority of the total voting power. The Fund's membership approved the resolution allowing for the creation of a 25th chair, exceeding the required threshold. The new Executive Board of 25 Executive Directors will take office on November 1, 2024, the presser added.

The global system is designed to create a better world for all the people from every walk of life. The common global pressing issues should also need a global solution by incorporating all the nations and left no one behind

Women in Focus

How African women be prepared for leadership

BY MEKDES TAYE (PhD)

African women's issues have been the leading issues of the continent for many years. Some people argue that the topic became a point of discussion after colonization. However, sources showed that the subject was among the most controversial ones. Instead of combating the problems, colonialism was the leading factor that hindered women from equal participation. It was a double burden that worsens females' status. The patriarchal structure which is informed by the socio cultural trend of the indigenous society and the super subversion of the colonial masters, African women were experiencing double exploitations. This means that they had cumulated pain and it was too difficult even to be recognized as a human being. After colonization, lots of measures have been taken to uplift and treat their psychological and socio cultural setup. In accelerating these things, various institutions and NGOs have been setting up their organizations aiming to overcome the problem and fill the gap in gender inequality.

Each country's government has also been drafting policies and strategies in a way that can bring change regarding women's equal participation in every aspect of competition. In addition to that, plans and programs at the continental and global level were proposed many times. The UN Women has been formulating various laws and policies that targeted the elimination of all forms of violence, promoted equal inclusion, and balanced exposure in the continent. International organizations and even leaders have been deciding on the prevalence of gender equilibrium in the world. But the practical result is almost the reverse. Now the question is how then these issues be approached to achieve the goals planned by local and international institutions. This idea is the hot and attention grabbing point to be discussed these days at every stage of the conferences held in the world.

A conference that was held in South Africa and incorporated top ministers from all African countries which are above 1000 members did raise the mentioned agenda in the meeting. As the foreign relation expert of SABC, Sofia, paraphrases the gist of the conference, these top officials were discussing points that are related to how African women be promoted and trained to take political leadership positions. The host of the program was asking Sofia "Who is holding back women from leadership?" Sofia responded based on the conference that she was attending. She said, "The woman herself. It is the woman herself who refrain from political competition. It is herself that leaves the

space to be headed by males. Even women didn't elect other women.

She elects the man since she didn't have self-confidence with other women too." Thus women who could work even better than males, are not yet elected by their own sisters. This has a greater effect in many ways. Logically thinking, there could not be any one that can understand woman better than the woman. Thus, seeing a woman ignoring another woman did complicate the empowering process of women in various areas of competition. The competition is so tough since she is going to face a male who is already socially approved for any position.

As political experts argued, issues of women are going to be formulated and implementation directions are going to be decided with the absence of women since women are not around that table. For better outcomes, women themselves need to be at the table. But the patriarchal effect and negative attitude of the people particularly women are affecting other women's empowerment. In this regard, the former UN Women Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka argued that "exclusion of women in decisions that affect their lives is bad sign of corporate government. It should not be allowed. This is why at this point we are at cross roads. We have to bring this to an end." The former Director's idea here is the government should be careful on gender equality before bringing issues to be decided since every issue is equally important for females too. Thus, the point is females need be active and committed in taking these positions that greatly matter their own life. They should not allow males to decide over them.

Dr. Ngozi Okonjo iwayola had a point on how to alert women to join political leadership. Here are her words. "If women are to make progress, men must also learn how to open the way. Men play a critical role in whether women make progress or not. And I often advise women, 'if you are seeking mentors don't only look to other women, also look to men. At this point, to me, men are controlling a lot of the places where women cannot get in to. And I want them to hear this message, 'you need to get out of the way a little bit so that women can have a chance.'"

From this remarkable woman, the idea that I personally encountered is the search of other women in a given area. In order to join a given platform, females most of the time need to see other women in the track. But that is not the right perception. Dr. Ngozi did believe that in the absence of females, there are males, so why do females need other females? Get in there. You can be the first on the journey. This is very important for the political positions

which are mainly dominated by males that is why they keep believing it is their world. But females should change this attitude and break the culture.

Ethiopia's experience regarding the measures which are undertaken to enable women come into leadership was pronounced by Women and Social Affairs Minister Ergogie Tesfaye (PhD) while she was interviewed by Kanchi Batra (Managing Editor at Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Diplomatist.)

The first question she was asked to address was the effort that the country was doing to bring gender equality. She said, "The move towards balancing gender in every sector required a greater struggle since the country had been experiencing patriarchy and socio-cultural trended degradation of females." Ignoring the participation of females, do mean that the sectors are missing more than half a percent of the population. As she confirmed, this had a negative impact on the transformation of the country. Here is her say, "not including the half percent of the society had a greater impact on the development of the country."

She raises the measures that the Minister is taking various actions to ensure gender balance in every institutional sector. In order to follow up policies formulations and the regulations of these policies, the office had created a department that primarily takes the mentioned concerns. This department is the main stream responsible for following up on the implementation of policies on gender, especially women's issues. The specific goal of this department is to detect how policies are addressed and how they are implemented. She said, "This is the indication that the Ministry is much committed to bringing women's participation to the higher level." I can comment on this measure that if policies are going to be regulated and further policies are going to be entertained, women could have a better environment to avail themselves into leadership positions.

The other measure the Ministry did to combat gender inequality in the country is launching daycare centers for babies that could mostly free women employees from routine baby care and frustrations for their babies. Since their babies are by the side of their working area, women can be free of any worries and get concentrate on their jobs. This is she said, "an opportunity which enables women to stay safe and proceed on their work assignments attentively." This again I believe is an encouraging effort for the women to step up forward to dream more positions.

Ergogie also raised an important point regarding the deed of the Ministry in enabling women to get encouraged to join a certain leadership. "We are basically working on advocacy. We have organized more than 3000 Youth Centers. And we are working on upgrading this center in to an entrepreneur level so that the youth population could be self-brilliant."

As I have been referring to the experiences of basically Joyce Banda and Ellen Johnson, in the previous articles these presidents were able to prepare a good number of female leaders through massive mobilization. They have organized associations and institutions and were able to mobilize millions of females. Thus the trend of the ministry of women and youth in Ethiopia is also adopting this approach. This move could produce more women leaders since having an alerted group regarding females by itself is a greater measure for our society.

Though the number is too small when it is compared with other African countries experiences, it is still appreciable. Such a massive approach as sources revealed is very important to create attitudinal change in the minds of the dominant public. This is said because the rooted patriarchy is still the greatest problem for women to get into the track of leadership. Thus, this patriarchy is going to be challenged through attitudinal change. Attitudinal change requires the raise of the group that stands against the mass. Therefore, massive mobilization can bring a greater change in the patriarchal perception of society.

The conclusion is considering African women to be included in every sector is not a choice rather it is a must for sustainable development and transformation. Women have their own unique nature and efficacy even better than their male counterpart. Thus, their inclusion did a lot to have a fruitful result in every sector. Africa is the lowest continent in gender equality. Although some improvements are registered in the area, there is still a very long way to go. The governments should work more in meeting the 2023 plan of the UN. Women themselves need to be very active, committed, and confident enough to step up the ladder to leadership. Change starts from the self. There are a lot of skilled and informed women in the country. This should be taken as an opportunity to bring a difference in the sector. The ministry can create a section that aims at encouraging and training these equipped women to help them take positions based on their merit. That is a logical move for sounding development and prosperity in the long run.

Society

From tradition to transformation: *Yelemat Tirufat*'s role on Ethiopian prosperity

BY LEULSEGED WORKU

The term *Lemat*, a basket used by Ethiopians to store *Enjera*, has a deep meaning among the majority. It is used in most cases associated with blessing, bountifulness and prosperity. That is why the term is found in most Ethiopian proverbs and used frequently by elders during their blessings. In other words, *Lemat* is not simply a common basket to store bread. It is a very special one that defines abundance.

Following reform changes the Ethiopian government has implemented several projects that can ensure economic prosperity and halt hunger from the nation. *Yelemat Tirufat*, a nationwide program that was launched in 2022 is one of these ambitious programs targeted to improve production and productivity.

Boosting productivity and production of dairy, eggs, chicken, and honey and related products as well as intensifying efforts to achieve food self-sufficiency and nutritional opulence at the family and national levels are among the targets of the program.

Using *Yelemat Tirufat* program, the government has also aimed to create job opportunities, increase exports and hastening import substitutions. Following the launching of the program several encouraging results are being witnessed all over the nation. This is especially true in areas of meat, milk and fish production. The program is also benefiting several individuals to achieve economic prosperity and fill market gaps in areas where there is a shortage of supplies. In Oromia region, South West Shewa Zone, Awas Woreda is among the areas where *Yelemat Tirufat* is ensuring food security and increasing farmers' income.

Using all the guidance and directives of the program farmers in Sebeta Awas Woreda is now witnessing an improved production and productivity. As indicated by the Ethiopian News Agency, farmers in Awas wereda are not only benefiting from an increased production but also from nutritional benefits of their products.

Besides filling family demands from their production the farmers are also selling their surplus products in the market, which in turn is benefiting them to earn more money and lead a better lifestyle. Farmers also said that, in addition to fulfilling their household demands and filling market gaps, the program is also playing significant role by providing job opportunities for several people in the area.

Ayi Tullu is among the dedicated beekeepers in Awas Woreda. Using all the directives of *Yelemat Tirufat* and he has witnessed a life-changing experience. With access to modern bee hives and training as part of the initiative, Ayi Tullu adopted advanced beekeeping practices that have revolutionized his approach to honey production.



“Through the utilization of modern beekeeping methods, I am able to increase my honey production substantially, leading to improved economic prospects for myself and my family. The increased productivity resulting from *Yelemat Tirufat* has brought about a positive change in my life and the well-being of my families, which brought a glimpse of hope to all of us.”

The success of Ayi Tullu serves as an inspiration to other beekeepers in the community, demonstrating the potential for growth and prosperity through dedication and applying modern techniques.

Tirunesh Anbesa, another dedicated poultry farmer, has also emerged as a shining example of the positive impact of the *Yelemat Tirufat* program in the Woreda. Through the adoption of modern technologies and best practices introduced by the initiative, Tirunesh has witnessed a remarkable surge in her daily egg production, revolutionizing her farming operations and opening up new market opportunities.

According to her, unlike the previous

times where her production was too little to supply into market, it has now increased dramatically. Using proper technology and excreting her energy Tirunesh is able to supply not less than 225 eggs to market every day.

Indeed, Ayi's and Tirunesh's journey from a traditional farming and poor production to a successful entrepreneur is a testament to the transformative power of innovative agricultural programs. By leveraging the resources and guidance provided by *Yelemat Tirufat*, Tirunesh and Ayi have been able to optimize their production and ensure substantial increase in egg and honey production.

As indicated by Awas Woreda, Agricultural Bureau Head, Amena Milkesa, proper implementation of *Yelemat Tirufat* is witnessing encouraging results. According to him, the Woreda is running the program in a well-organized manner and this is increasing honey, egg, and meat and milk production. He also said that, the use of improved technologies and proper directives given by agriculture professionals

has contributed to increased production and productivity.

“*Yelemat Tirufat*” or “The Bounty of Basket” initiative, spearheaded by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD), is proving to be a significant benefit to numerous Ethiopians. This project, designed to uplift communities and improve livelihoods, has brought about several positive outcomes.

Projects like *Yelemat Tirufat* often include infrastructure development such as roads, irrigation systems, and utilities, which benefit the overall community. The initiative empowers Ethiopians by providing them with economic opportunities and resources to enhance their financial well-being. By generating employment opportunities, the project helps reduce unemployment rates and stimulates economic growth in the region.

Yelemat Tirufat initiative is also playing a transformative role in stabilizing agricultural markets in Ethiopia. By boosting productivity and promoting fair pricing practices, the program not only enhances the economic prospects of individual farmers but also contributes to the overall stability and health of the agricultural sector. *Yelemat Tirufat* Project is making a positive impact on thousands of Ethiopians.

This initiative, aimed at improving the livelihoods of the local community, has brought about several benefits. Focusing on agriculture, the initiative is boosting food security, increasing crop yields, and enhancing the agricultural sector's productivity. What is more, the initiative contributes to enhancing social welfare by providing access to education, healthcare, and other essential services to the population.

As *Yelemat Tirufat* continues to empower farmers and adapt to market demands, it holds the potential to create a more resilient and sustainable agricultural economy that benefits all stakeholders involved.



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HU participates in RUFORUM triennial conference

The Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) Triennial Conference which Haramaya University is taking part in was officially commenced in Windhoek, Namibia on Tuesday.

The second RUFORUM Triennial Conference is being hosted by the Government of Namibia in collaboration with RUFORUM member universities, under the theme: “Operationalizing Higher Agricultural Education and Research Ecosystems for Innovation, Industrialization, and Economic Development in Africa: A Call for Action.”

The Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) is a gathering of African universities focused on modernizing agriculture and transforming the continent. The presence of the Ethiopian delegation shows the universities’ commitment to collaborate with their African counterparts in addressing agricultural challenges and driving sustainable development in the continent.

Professor Patrick Okori, the forum’s secretary, emphasized the crucial role of education in driving Africa’s development. Africans need to pool their knowledge and work together to achieve this. There is also a need for collaborative research to address the continent’s existential threats in agriculture.

Furthermore, Prof. Patrick noted that declining



HU President Jemal Yousuf (PhD) in the Forum

agricultural yields due to climate change and other factors necessitate a shift towards technology-driven education to equip the youth with the skills needed to modernize African agriculture.

Equally, Namibian Minister of Higher Education, Training, and Innovation, Dr. Itah Kandji Murangi, stressed the importance of transforming technologies and work practices to ensure food security for all Africans. Agricultural scholars across the continent have to prioritize quality education and collaboration to produce graduates capable of achieving this.

Similarly, Deputy Vice-Chancellor of the University of Namibia, Professor Kao Akeng’i, underscored the need for universities to continuously adapt their curricula and embrace technology to produce graduates who can harness technological advancements for agricultural

purposes.

The forum highlighted the importance of education, technology, and collaboration in transforming African agriculture. Participants called for a shift towards technology-driven education to equip the youth with the skills needed to address the continent’s agricultural challenges.

RUFORUM was established in 2004, and it is a consortium of 170 African universities operating in 40 countries, with a mission to strengthen the capacities of universities to foster innovations that meet the demands of smallholder farmers through training high-quality researchers, producing impact-oriented research, and maintaining collaborative relationships among researchers, farmers, and national agricultural research institutions. RUFORUM was praised for

fostering collaboration and capacity building among African universities.

Since the establishment of RUFORUM, Haramaya University has been actively working with the forum to address the African continent’s agricultural sectors’ human resource needs.

This event also marks a significant milestone, celebrating RUFORUM’s 20th anniversary over 1,000 delegates, including partners, heads of development institutions, private sector leaders, farmers, and their representatives, emerging and early-career researchers, and young entrepreneurs, particularly from Namibia and other Southern African countries, are attending the conference. The conference will be held until tomorrow Friday 16th August.

The State Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) Ministry of Education, Kora Toshene, is attending the RUFORUM 2nd Triennial Conference in Windhoek, Namibia. And Ethiopian University leaders are attending the RUFORUM Conference in Namibia. Dr. Jemal Yousuf, President of Haramaya University, and Dr. Awel Seid, Vice President of Wollo University, Representatives of Mekelle, Aksum, and Hawassa Universities, and other staff members of Haramaya University are also participating in the conference.

(Haramaya University Public and International Relations Directorate reported.)